

PRESENTATION BY: DR. CECILIA BENTSI (CHAIRPERSON RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AND MEMBER OF THE PLATFORM) - 12/12/13

INTRODUCTION:

- The Relief and Reconstruction Technical Advisory Committee of NADMO is one of the eight Technical Advisory Committees which advise the Secretariat on issues on disaster risk reduction, climate change risk and relief management.
- The Committee as other Organizations in Relief Administration has for some time now shifted from the traditional relief services of response approach to a more inter-sectoral institutional management approach which concentrates more than ever before in addressing the issues of risk reduction for vulnerable people in the communities.
- Till a few decades ago disasters were viewed as one off events and responded by governments and relief agencies without taking into accounts the social and economic implications and causes of these events.
- The Committee sees to the provision of protection and assistance to victims of disasters and their further rehabilitation.

The Committee is made up of the following organizations:

MEMBERSHIP:

1. Ghana Medical School
2. Department of Rural Housing
3. Vodafone Ghana
4. Christian Council of Ghana
5. AESL
6. Ghana Red Cross
7. Survey Department
8. Electricity Corporation of Ghana
9. National Catholic Secretariat
10. World Vision Ghana
11. Association of Building & Civil Contractors
12. Assemblies of God Dev. & Relief Agency
13. Public Works Department
14. Ghana Army
15. World Food Programme
16. National Ambulance Service

17. Action Aid Ghana
18. UN – Inter Agency Standing Committee(IASC)
19. Ghana Air Force
20. Private Sector
21. Ghana Police Service
22. The Ghana Federation of the Disabled

MAIN FUNCTIONS:

- Advises NADMO on relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction issues for effective and efficient disaster management in the country.
- Works with the Relief and Reconstruction Department of NADMO under which are the following units: Relief and Counseling (for Assessment, Registration, Distribution, and counseling), Rehabilitation and Resettlement, Refugee Camps/Settlements and Warehouse to ensure that relief and rehabilitation activities are performed in an effective efficient, accountable and transparent manner.
- Assists the secretariat in the development of plans to meet the country's short, medium and long-term relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction needs, and also monitors programme implementation.
- Sets standards for assessment of relief/resettlement impact in emergency response programmes.
- Advises on the management of deportees/returnees and refugees in the Country
- Collaborates with other Technical Advisory Committees in the setting up of structures to assist the Secretariat in disaster management and resource mobilization

COMPONENTS OF RELIEF: THESE ENCOMPASS:

1. Search and Rescue
2. Evacuation Operations
3. Provision of:
 - Food
 - Water
 - Clothing
 - Shelter
 - Medical Care
 - Security and
 - Counseling.

PHASES OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Pre-disaster Phase:

- Logistics Planning
- Resource Mobilization
- Identification of Storage Facilities
- Stockpiling and Allocation of Resources
- Formation of Task Forces
- Simulation Exercise & Training
- Contingency Planning
- Identification of safe havens and storage facilities.

Crisis/Emergency Phase:

- Search and Rescue
- Evacuation to Safe Havens
- Identification and Registration of Victims
- Needs Assessment
- Relief Administration:
 1. Food
 2. Water
 3. Clothing
 4. Medical Care
 5. Shelter
 6. Psycho-Social Support (Counselling)
 7. Security Support (Law & Order)

Post Disaster Phase:

- Restoration of Essential Utilities/Services
- Rehabilitation
- Resettlement
- Reconstruction
- Promotion of Self-Reliance
- Development
- Post-Disaster Review

DISASTER RELIEF OPERATIONS:

Joint Damage and Needs Assessment:

1. The Committee has assisted the Secretariat in the past and recent times in joint damage and needs assessment of disasters in the country with Government Agencies, NGOs, Private Sector and UN Inter Agency Emergency Committee. Examples are the 1999, 2007 and 2009 Northern floods, the Greater Accra, Central and Western Regions floods of June 2010 and the September, 2012 Ada and Keta tidal waves.
2. The Committee in conjunction with the Hydro- meteorological Technical Advisory Committee did flooding assessment at Keta, Tegbui and Afife in the Volta Region in 2009 and 2010.

Public Education:

The Committee members have also been participating in Radio and Television discussions on disaster risk reduction and Climate Change Risk Management. Some members have been serving as facilitators on the Secretariat's public education drive.

DRAWING AND REVIEWING OF DISASTER

Documents:

- The Committee has consistently reviewed the Relief and Reconstruction Management Plan which it developed in 1998. This year, it again reviewed the 2012 document which the UNFPA is funding to Print.
- It participated in the drawing up of the National Disaster Management Plan and also initiated the development of the National Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and the preparation of hazards maps for the Organisation.
- The Committee is advocating for the implementation of the Appropriate Housing Scheme project, it developed some years ago. This is to improve the building culture of the people especially in the flood prone areas.
- Currently, it is collaborating with the Man Made Technical Advisory Committee to update the National Disaster Management Plan and Standard Operating Procedures to include possible Terrorist Attacks.

Training and Orientation:

1. The Committee assists in the training and orientation of District Co-ordinators to update their skills and knowledge in disaster and relief management.

2. In the committee's orientation programmes they emphasize contingency planning approach to enhanced and improve efficiency of relief agencies in the short, medium and long term.
3. There are initiatives aimed at reducing social and economic vulnerability and investing in long term mitigation activities. Unfortunately such initiatives aimed at prevention and mitigation are few, poorly funded and insignificant in comparison with money spent by donors and development partners on humanitarian assistance and relief as well as on post disaster reconstruction.
4. Therefore, the Committee in line with the ECOWAS programme of action for disaster risk reduction 2012-2014, feels that poverty reduction and disaster risk reduction programmes must be integrated to enhance the livelihoods of the people. When peoples' incomes are improved, they tend to spend more on disaster riskmanagement activities in order to save their property and their own lives. On the other hand, if they do not have any savings then investing in disaster risk reduction becomes the least priority in comparison to the chronic issues of survival. Diversity in the sources of livelihoods is very important for increasing people's capacity to cope and recover from disasters.
5. The Community-Based Disaster Management is another form of orientation the Committee emphasises and this is to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen people's capacity to cope with hazards. A thorough assessment of a community's exposure to hazards and an analysis of their specific vulnerabilities and capacities is the basis for activities, projects and programmes that can reduce disaster risks.

Sub-Regional Collaboration:

The Committee represented the Government of Ghana at the Meeting of National Humanitarian Response Coordination Focal Institutions in Cotonou, Benin (2012) and Lagos, Nigeria (2013) to plan and Validate the ECOWAS Model for National Disaster Management Agencies in West Africa.

CHALLENGES:

The Committee's work has also confronted some challenges, and some are numerated below:

- Difficulty in reaching some of the communities in distress.
- Though search and rescue equipment has significantly improved, we still ask for more.
- Encroachment on safe havens or parks/spaces left for evacuation of disaster victims by developers.
- Funds for stocking relief items for prompt response are insufficient.
- Inadequate funds for training of staff and volunteers in relief response.

- Insufficient freight of vehicles, especially heavy trucks to move relief items to the affected communities within the regions.
- Inadequate relief for disaster victims.
- Inadequate trained psycho-social counselors to assist the traumatised victims.
- The difficulty in resettling and integrating returnees into the communities due to lack of funds to effect such project.
- Most MDAs/Institutions do not have disaster management plans.

CONCLUSION:

The Relief and Reconstruction Technical Advisory Committee has contributed a lot towards disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation management in the country to support the efforts of NADMO and its collaborators.

THANK YOU